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SUBJECT: CORREA'S INAUGURATION FOR 2ND PRESIDENTIAL TERM

¶1. (SBU) Summary: President Correa's August 10 inauguration day schedule was packed, combining swearing-in events with the transfer of the rotating presidency of UNASUR (septel). The political speeches during the day were heavily ideological and meant to ratify the goals of Correa's "citizens' revolution." Correa made one neutral reference to the U.S., but also a number of anti-American remarks. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The inauguration ceremony took place on August 10, as the government had desired, on the same date that Ecuadorians celebrated the 200th anniversary of Ecuador's First Call for Independence. The main event was held at the National Assembly building and was attended by high ranking Ecuadorians, eight heads of state, other delegations, special guests, and members of the diplomatic corps.

¶3. (U) During his inauguration speech, Correa highlighted the pillars of his citizens' revolution, the new constitution, criticism of the media, and reduction in debt payments. He rejoiced in his unprecedented electoral triumph and the support he received from the Ecuadorian people. No opposition legislators attended the event.

¶4. (SBU) In regard to foreign relations, Correa made a commitment to promote bilateral relations "based on dialogue, cooperation, and the development of constructive agendas with all the countries of the world, as today we are showing in the bilateral agendas with countries such as Peru, Chile, the U.S., and the rest of our brother countries of the continent, provided that such relations are based on mutual respect and respect for our sovereignty." He also pointed out that his government would continue to strengthen South-South relations.

¶5. (SBU) Correa's speech was not lacking in negative references to the U.S. and what he alleged were imperialistic U.S. interests. He touched on the U.S. while speaking about economic issues, but his remarks became sharper when he addressed the Ecuador-Colombia border conflict and the U.S. fight against narco-trafficking. Correa stated, "I hope that the installation of military bases on Colombia soil does not propose to strengthen the war-prone policy of our neighbor government, and combat, not narco-trafficking, but the insurgent governments of our American continent." He pointed to what he called a double standard because the GOC was arguing that U.S. access to bases in Colombia was strictly a Colombian affair, while nuclear programs (presumably meaning Iran's) that were considered hostile to "certain centers of power" were treated as an issue of global concern.

¶6. (SBU) Referring to the U.S. Forward Operating Location (FOL) in Manta, Ecuador, Correa went on to suggest that the

United States' true motives were being hidden: "A few days ago, the last foreign soldier that was in our territory went back to his country, and we had the satisfaction of announcing to Ecuadorians that we had recovered our territorial sovereignty, which in a moment of surrender was mutilated in favor of another government, whose goals are not necessarily those advocated in public." (Note: It is not accurate that all U.S. military have left Manta -- the last of the U.S. presence will depart September 18. End Note.)

¶17. (SBU) Correa made a point of celebrating the triumph of his citizen revolution with the common people of Ecuador by hosting an event for them at a soccer stadium, with performances by popular entertainers and political speeches. Most of the cabinet was in attendance, as well as Presidents Chavez, Zelaya, and Raul Castro. Correa referred to what he termed imperialism, saying that U.S. bases in Colombia were a provocation and that if war was wanted, the countries of Latin America would be ready and united. Castro's speech mentioned that President Obama was a man of good intentions, but that no coups had occurred in South American without U.S. authorization. After Castro had spoken for more than ten minutes, there were some hisses or whistles from the crowd; Correa seemed to notice and made a few motions to the crowd for patience. Chavez spoke about Bolivar, recited a poem, congratulated Ecuador, and was otherwise low-key. Although the stadium was arranged so that it only needed to be half full, by the end of the speeches many people in the audience had left.

OTHER EVENTS WITH OFFICIAL GUESTS

¶18. (SBU) The Ecuadorian government offered two luncheons, one hosted by President Correa for heads of state and the other by Vice President Lenin Moreno for the other delegations. The Ambassador introduced the U.S. delegation to Vice President Moreno. The site for the evening reception was a large historic convent, a popular tourist attraction, and all visiting delegations were invited to attend. Although President Correa arrived very late, the Ambassador succeeded in introducing the U.S. delegation to Correa.

COMMENT

¶19. (SBU) Correa's inauguration speech broke no new ground in sending mixed signals about his intended relationship with the U.S. On the one hand, he mentioned the U.S. as an example of a country with which Ecuador sustained an ongoing bilateral agenda for cooperation, and emphasized the need for mutual respect between the countries. On the other hand, his speeches throughout the day were peppered with words of mistrust and negative references to the U.S. and U.S. interests.

HODGES